

*On the Aversion of Men of
Taste*

nation? Do you not absolutely know that the littleness which you see investing that religion is adventitious? Are you not certain that in hearing the discourse of such men, if they were now to be found, as those I have named, the evangelical truths would appear to you sublime, and that they cannot be less so in fact than they would appear as displayed from those minds? But even suppose that *they* also failed, and that all modern Christians, without exception, had conspired to give an unattractive and unimpressive aspect to the subject of their profession, there is still the Christian Revelation—may I not presume that you sometimes read it? But this is to be done in that state of susceptible seriousness, without which you will have no just apprehension of its character; without which you are but like an ignorant clown, who, happening to look at the heavens, perceives nothing more awful in that immeasurable wilderness of suns than in the row of lamps along the streets. If you do read that book, in the better state of feeling, I have no comprehension of the constitution of your mind, if the first perception would not be that of a simple venerable dignity, and if the second would not be that of a certain abstract undefinable magnificence; a perception of something which, behind this simplicity, expands into a greatness beyond the compass of your mind; an impression like that which a thoughtful and imaginative man might be supposed to have looked on the countenance of Newton, feeling a kind of mystical absorption in the attempt to comprehend the magnitude of the soul residing within that form. When in this state of serious susceptibility, have you not also perceived in the character and the manner of the first apostles of this truth, while they were declaring it, an expression of dignity, altogether different from that of other distinguished men, and much more elevated and unearthly? If you examined the cause, you perceived that the dignity arose partly from their being employed as living oracles of this truth, and still more from their whole characters being pervaded by its spirit. And have you not been sometimes conscious, for a moment, that if it possessed your soul in the same manner as it did theirs, it would raise you to be one of the most excellent order of mortals? You would then stand forth in a combination of sanctity, devotion, disinterestedness, superiority to external things, energy, and